

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO EC COLLECTIVE
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USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, DA
SUBJECT: LO DISASSOCIATES ITSELF FROM COALITION GOVERNMENT

REF: COPENHAGEN 5702

SUMMARY: AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES
(560) FROM ALL OF ITS AFILIATES, THE DANISH TRADE
UNION CONFEDERATION (LO) DISASSOCIATED ITSELF
FROM THE NEW SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/LIBERAL (S/V) COALITION.
IT DID NOT, HOWEVER, SPLIT OFF FROM THE PARTY FOR
HISTORICAL REASONS EXPLAINED IN SOME DETAIL BY LO
PRESIDENT NIELSEN. THE LO ALSO STAKED OUT ITS
GOALS FOR THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ROUND BEGINNING
IN NOVEMBER. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY DECISION
TO FORM A COALITION HS SEVERLY STRAINED ITS RELATION-
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SHIP WITH LO. END SUMMARY.
1. LO PRESIDENT THOMAS NIELSEN DIASSOCIATED THE
DANISH TRADE UNION CENTER FROM PRIIN ANKER
JORGENSEN'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/LIBERAL GOVT
SEPTEMBER 12 AT A MEETING OF THE LO'S PRINCIPAL
REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL AFFILIATES. NIELSEN, HOWEVER,
REJECTED A SPLIT WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATES

AND WARNED AGAINST COOPERATION WITH THE PARTIES OF THE EXTREME LEFT. HIS VIEWS RECEIVED THE SUPPORT OF THE PARTICIPANTS WITH ONLY 8 OPPOSING VOTES FROM THE 560 PERSON ASSEMBLY.

2. "WITHOUT EXAGGERATION, THE LABOR MOVEMENT (SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY-TRADE UNION ALLIANCE) TODAY IS EXPERIENCING THE GREATEST INTERNAL CRISIS EVER," NIELSEN SAID. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HIS CRITICISM OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT COALITION WAS MADE NOT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A NARROWLY FOCUSED PRESSURE GROUP - WHICH, HE SAID, THE LO WAS NOT, BUT FROM THAT OF A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PEOPLES' MOVEMENT WITH POLITICAL POSITIONS. THE LABOR MOVEMENT HAD BEEN PLACED UNDER PRESSURE FROM BOURGOIS/LIBERAL FORCES BEFORE, BUT THE LABOR MOVEMENT, BECAUSE OF ITS UNITY AND COOPERATION, HAD ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO RESIST EFFECTIVELY. MOREOVER, THIS UNITY HAD BEEN THE BASIS FOR THE SOCIAL REFORMS WHICH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED THROUGHOUT THE YEARS. THIS TIME, IN SPITE OF THE UNANIMOUS OPPOSITION OF THE TRADE UNIONS, THE LABOR MOVEMENT'S POLITICAL ARM (THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY) HAD ENTERED INTO A COALITION GOVT WITH THOSE WHO REJECTED EVERY LO DEMAND FOR A NEW LOOK AT SOCIETY AND FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF NECESSARY REFORMS. AS A RESULT, THE TRADE UNIONS WERE IN AN EVEN WORSE POSITION THAN IN 1976. THE GOVT WAS IN COALITION WITH EMPLOYERS AND LIBERALS WITH A MAJORITY OF THE FOLKETING SUPPORTIVE OF THEIR VIEWS. HENCE, THE SOCIAL DMOCRATS WERE PARTICIPANTS IN A GOVT FOUNDED ON A BOURGEOIS PLATFORM.

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3. NIELSEN SAID THAT ACHIEVEMENT OF NEW REFORMS IN DANISH SOCIETY WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE ON THE BASIS OF A MORE OR LESS ACCIDENTAL TURN OF PUBLIC OPINION TO THE RIGHT. THE DANISH ECONOMIC SYSTEM COULD BE DEVELOPED IN A MORE DEMOCRATIC DIRECTION ONLY WITH A DETERMINED, WELL-ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT. CONSEQUENTLY, THE LO WILL NOT BREAK WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR NEW PARTIES, NIELSEN SAID. INSTEAD, THE LO WILL STRIVE FOR UNITY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT, BUT WITH LOYALTY TO FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. IT COULD ONLY HOPE THAT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADERSHIP WOULD WORK TO CONVINCE ITS GOVT PARTNER OF THE NECESSITY AND REASONABLENESS OF THE OVERALL BALANCED LO PROPOSALS AS THE WAY OF OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS.

4. THE LO ASSEMBLY DECIDED TO DEMAND INCLUSION OF "ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY" IN THE NEW NATIONAL WAGE NEGOTIATION SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN NOVEMBER. IF "ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY" CANNOT BE ACHIEVED, THE PROGRAM OF THE COALITION GOVT WILL CAUSE UNACCEPTABLE DISTORTIONS IN THE OWNERSHIP OF WEALTH IN DENMARK, NIELSEN SAID. FURTHER, THE LO WILL DEMAND THAT GUARANTEES FOR REAL WAGE MAINTENANCE AND REDUCTIONS IN THE WORK WEEK (POSSIBLY THROUGH LONGER VACATIONS) BE PART OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND WILL INSIST THAT FULL COST-OF-LIVING COMPENSATION GAIN BECOME A RESPONSIA

BILITY OF THE EMPLOYERS. (DANISH EMPLOYERSS' CONFEDERATION
PRESIDENT JENS THORSEN REACTED IMMEDIATELY, STATING THAT UNDER
NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THE EMPLOYERS BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS
"ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY" IN THE COMING NATIONAL WAGE NEGOTIATIONS.)

5. COMMENT: THERE IS NO MISTAKING THE DISAPPOINT-
MENT OF THE TRADE UNIONS WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.
BARRING UNFORESEEN INTERNATIONAL RECOVERY, THE PROSPECT IS FOR
CONTINUING RESTRICTIVE ECONOMIC POLICIES IN DENMARK, WHICH
THE LO PERCEIVES WILL BE AT ITS MEMBERS' COST. COOPERATION WITH
THE PARTY WILL BE ON AN ISSUE-TO-ISSUE BASIS FROM THE LO SIDE,
BUT A CUT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE UNITY OF THE
LABOR MOVEMENT THAT WILL HARDLY HEAL WITHOUT A
SCAR.

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